THE PERSIMMON GROUP

Virtual Communication: How Not To Go Insane

Primary Use: Internal
Microsoft Teams is designed to be your internal organization's primary communication tool...the place where you "do your work."

Primary Use: External
Microsoft Outlook is designed to be the place for formal communication to customers and formal communication within your company (i.e. announcements).

Virtual Decision Making Guidance

Framing Decisions
MS Teams (or Email, for presenting long-form information)
Fact-Finding, Light Discussion, Simple Coordination

Making Decisions
Live Communication (vs. Long Email Threads)
Deep discussion, decision-making, complex coordination

Communicating Decisions
Email and/or Daily Stand-ups
Summarizing decisions to larger team (e.g. everyone impacted)

Urgent or "Crisis" Communication – Consider sending a text to everyone impacted letting them know an important email has been sent.

Golden Rules

Need a response in <2 hours?
Use Text, Phone Call, or Short-Notice Teams Call

Have a non-urgent (>24 hours) need involving multiple people?
Consider Scheduling a Teams Call (i.e. Send a Meeting Request)
Do Not Schedule Short Notice Teams Calls

Scheduling a meeting?
Consider 20-minute or 50-minute meetings to allow people to take more frequent breaks during the day

Best Practices

Teams

1. **Avoid having too many teams.** Archive the ones you don't use.

2. **Let people invite themselves if the Team is fluid** (e.g. a Team for a private class creation).

3. **Configure your notifications to avoid overwhelm.** Go to settings in the desktop app to do this.

4. **Use the "thumbs up" reaction to show acknowledgment** (like a read: receipt).

5. **Don't get overwhelmed by all the options.** Teams come with a lot of apps you can use...you don't have to use all of it.

Channels

1. **The General channel is for announcements.** Standing rule across all Teams.

2. **Consider a "meta-channel" for** questions that pertain the team overall.

3. **@mention people who join a Channel.** New channels may not be followed automatically.

4. **Don't have too many channels.** It can create confusion about where to post.

5. **Don't rename a channel without notice to entire Team.** It can create some unintended consequences.

Best Practices for Conversations (Not the Same as Chats: i.e. Posts, Not Private Chats.)

1. **Put a subject line when starting your conversation.** Do that by selecting the first button in the toolbar (A) to format your post.

2. **@mention individuals to get their attention and a response.** Expect a reply with same urgency as email.